



WOMEN RALLIED to the war effort to take the place of men called into military service once the war started.



ACROSS THE RIVER, the Jeffersonville Boat & Machine Company, employing thousands of Louisvillians, became the largest producer of L.S.T.'s.

Even while helping win the war, the city

Electric Company took the decisive, long-range action which was to affect Louisville as nothing ever had done before.

Soon after Hitler declared war on Poland, the company initiated an order for two new 30,000 kilowatt generating units for a plant not yet started. The thinking was that the United States sooner or later would be dragged into the war, a struggle that would require all-out production to win. What with its inland location, abundant water and other advantages, Louisville would need only plentiful power to blossom into a war industry center, the company believed.

Not long after the order for the new generators had been placed, the government froze all such production. However, orders already made were allowed to be honored, and so the Louisville Gas and Electric Company had units on the way which were the beginning of the Paddy's Run Station, the magnet which drew several giant war-type plants to the city.

Meanwhile, in late October of 1940, the country's first peace-time military draft law went into effect, and 14 Louisville men were among the initial handful of civilians to be called into service.

The war clouds continued to darken.

And the Louisville area continued to expand with war work.

Fort Knox was made the home of the U. S. Armored Force; Bowman Field was taken over by the Army Air Corps as a training base; Standiford Field was constructed; one of the nation's largest powder making complexes was

started near Charlestown, Ind.; the Naval Ordnance Plant, the Medical Depot and Nichols Hospital were established in the city; Curtiss-Wright opened a cargo plane plant, and the "Rubbertown" development on Bells Lane started when plants were erected to make neoprene, butadiene and other synthetic rubber substances.

Despite all this preparation, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, caught Louisville, like other American cities, by surprise.

After the sneak attack plunged the United States headlong into the war, no city of comparable size played a more vital role in the war effort than did Louisville.

New plants continued to settle in the area, and existing firms converted overnight to war production until industrial capacity had doubled that of 1939. The National Defense Commission stated that Louisville was the 18th largest industrial area in the country in volume of war contracts awarded.

Louisville became known as the synthetic rubber capital of America, with five giant plants turning out the material; shell casings, aluminum, gun stocks, trucks, airplanes, cannon, uniforms, tents, medicines, food and an infinite variety of other military necessities flowed from local factories; across the river, the Jeffersonville Boat and Machine Company, employing hundreds of Louisvillians, grew to be the largest producer of LST's in the nation.

As the fury of the war increased, overseas there were anxious months and American forces

fought tenaciously and with severe losses. Finally, the industrial might of this nation began to tell. The tide of battle turned, and the slow process of retaking lost positions began.

At home, in Louisville as elsewhere, there was rationing of gasoline, food, shoes; there were price controls; hotels, restaurants and trains were overcrowded; women took the place in industry of men called up for military duty.

A few statistics show clearly how Louisville rallied to the war effort. Traffic over the Municipal Bridge rose from 1,473,362 vehicles in 1939 to 3,982,660 in 1944; industrial and large commercial power consumption jumped from 158,094,936 kilowatt hours in 1939 to 877,347,073 in 1944. Bank clearings for the same period increased from \$1,778,585,000 to \$3,742,000,000. Population in Jefferson County exploded by nearly 60,000.

Long before the war ended, Louisville was thinking wisely about its conversion from war to peacetime industrial production. In October of 1943, 300 civic and business leaders gathered to discuss intelligent, long-range plans for readjustment once the war had ended. It was the feeling that many industries that had come new into the area would remain, and that the same advantages that had attracted them would draw still other firms to provide the wants of the peacetime market.

From that meeting, the Louisville Area Development Association was formed, and an immediate study of adequate, permanent housing,